



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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New Asian trade representatives available to assist Washington food exporters

OLYMPIA – The state Department of Agriculture (WSDA) began a contract July 1 with Philander Fan's Marketing Plus. Representatives of the Hong Kong-based firm are meeting with a variety of Western Washington food and agricultural companies this week to discuss export opportunities in China. A contract also was signed in June with Chen Hui Cheng of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Cheng will promote Washington agriculture in Southeast Asian countries, including Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia.

For the next year or so, both companies will represent WSDA in its efforts to promote overseas sales of Washington agricultural products by providing buyers and sellers with trade leads, setting up market promotions, reaching out to new, first-time exporters, and helping to introduce new products to markets.

Philander Fan's Marketing Plus will provide the services of two trade representatives to increase sales of Washington food and agricultural products to China. They are Hai-dong Li of Shanghai and Richard Hu of Beijing. Last week, Li and Hu introduced Chinese importers to Yakima and Wenatchee fruit exporters. On Monday, they met with Director Valoria Loveland and other senior WSDA officials to discuss trade strategy and learn more about Washington's export-ready firms.

They will market Washington foods ranging from cherries to seafood to grocery items. Marketing Plus has helped the Washington Apple Commission and the Washington Fruit Commission to make government and industry contacts in China for several years.

"China is such a huge potential market for our state's agriculture that we're pleased to have funds available to support marketing efforts in Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou and other Chinese cities," Loveland said. The federal funds are part of the \$10.1 million WSDA received last year to support state agricultural programs.

Chen Hui Cheng: Cheng will visit the state later this summer to become more familiar with Washington products. She also is promoting a "The Best of Washington State" food event in mid-July in Kuala Lumpur featuring cherries, seafood, juice purees, apples and Washington wines. Several of her projects involve Washington's apple and fruit commissions.

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Last year, International Marketing Program staff assisted Washington food exporters with \$80 million in sales. In addition to outreach efforts in China and Southeast Asia, the program has trade representatives in Tokyo, Japan and Taipei, Taiwan.

WSDA's overseas trade representatives and staff in Olympia and Yakima help food and agricultural companies to sell their products internationally, help resolve phytosanitary and other trade barriers, organize and lead companies on trade missions and major trade shows, and develop and distribute information to buyers on Washington's agricultural suppliers.

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